



The Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Inverness

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# **LOCAL CHURCH REVIEW**

Sections 1 & 2

Congregation - Kiltarlity

Minister – Rev Jonathan Humphrey

Visiting team leader – Rev Bruce  
Ritchie

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## **SECTION 1: OUR CONGREGATION'S STORY**

### **1. Present purpose**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

Kiltarlity church is a linked rural congregation in the Highlands with a history that dates back to the middle ages and a commitment to living in the love of Jesus, becoming more like him, and making his love known to all in our community. We are a family who love having fun together and honouring God in the way we live. We are passionate about Jesus being the centre of everything we do.

Our aim is for everyone to feel welcomed and find a home at Kiltarlity Parish Church, regardless of church background, or whether they have faith, a little faith or none.

#### **1.2. Worship**

[Tell us about your weekly services; how they are led; the music; the use of audio/visual equipment; congregational participation; any plans for the future?](#)

Since the arrival of Jonathan the new minister in March 2015, the emphasis in worship services has been to seek the presence of God above all else and to keep the worship and adoration of Jesus at the centre (see item 4 on Values and Convictions). We have also sought to develop service style and content that is accessible to all ages and life situations, and particularly those of younger age groups who are significantly under-represented currently in the congregation (see Appendix 1). This approach has entailed: diversifying the musical content of services to include a rough 50:50 split of modern and traditional hymns; facilitating an informal, loving and family atmosphere; and emphasising the importance of warmly welcoming new people.

The congregational questionnaire (appendix 2) revealed that currently 94% of the congregation “agree” with or “strongly agree” with the statement that we are friendly to new people and 97% agree/strongly agree that our worship services are welcoming and accessible to all ages; 79% said they would be happy to invite their friends to be part of the congregation. Over the past 18 months, attendance at morning worship has increased from the mid 20s to mid 40s with two new young families now attending regularly.

A typical Sunday morning worship led by Jonathan includes:

- Welcome and opening prayer; praise;
- Intimations delivered orally and on screen (these are also covered in weekly bulletin distributed at door),
- All-age address
- Modern praise song (after which children depart to upper church hall);
- Offering, dedication/prayers for others and Praise song
- Reading and sermon, ending with final prayer, praise and benediction

Words and sermon illustrations are projected on 5 AV screens. This is co-ordinated by Jonathan with the help of congregation members on a rota basis. Our regular organist Tonya

Clement accompanies praise on organ or keyboard. Jonathan usually also accompanies on guitar some praise items and Laura Guthrie sings, but we would love to have more musicians join us to bolster the music group and enhance and diversify worship.

Members of the congregation contribute to prayers and readings each week on a rota basis. Two members also help with the All-age address and there are regular contributions from other members of the congregation on specific topics. The Sunday Club lead 2-3 services a year and there are also a number of family services. Evening services are held monthly (excluding summer) jointly with Kirkhill, are more informal and include contemporary worship, testimony, teaching and prayer ministry.

Café church services have been held jointly with Kirkhill and Kiltarlity Free Church in Kiltarlity Village Hall and these are well attended (120-140) and are proving more accessible to non-church people.

### **1.3. Local Mission**

Tell us about how you engage with your parish and your wider community; how do you reach out to others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; what school involvement or other chaplaincies are you involved with; how do you communicate with members, adherents and parishioners; do you work in partnership or have strong links with other churches and/or other organisations in your parish?

Sunday teaching emphasises the need to engage in mission and of sharing the gospel with our local community and parish through evangelism, witness and service. When asked in the congregational questionnaire whether “the church encourages me to share my Christian faith in my daily life”, over 80% of the congregation agreed/strongly agreed that it did (appendix 2). This reveals an open-ness in the congregation towards an emphasis on local mission. However, only 65% of the congregation agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that we are “known for being loving and helpful in our community,” suggesting that there is work to be done to improve relationships between church and community and change perceptions.

We have a good relationship with Kiltarlity Free Church and occasionally share worship with them. So far in conjunction with them and our sister congregation of Kirkhill, two well-attended and successful "Cafe Church" events have been held in Kiltarlity public hall, the focal point of the village. Last year there were 2 baptisms, 8 funerals and 2 weddings in our church. Funerals in particular are well-attended (upwards of 200), which provides opportunities to preach the gospel within the context of pastoral care of the bereaved family. On Armistice Sunday Jonathan presides at a service held at the village war memorial and a Watchnight service is held at the church each Christmas Eve.

Jonathan regularly conducts assemblies at Tomnacross Primary School, Kiltarlity and provides teaching relating to the R.M.E. part of the National Curriculum. School Easter and Christmas services are held in the church. Kiltarlity and Kirkhill jointly participate in the "Open the Book" programme by visiting the primary schools in each parish to spread the gospel story by way of dramatic presentation.

We hold regular Alpha courses in partnership with Kirkhill Church. The last course was held during the day in Kirkhill church, starting with coffee and finishing up with lunch. This attracted some young mothers with children and we had an average of 10-12 attending weekly. Many grew in their faith and some found faith for the first time. A life group was started during the day as a follow up to the Alpha course (see 1.5 below).

In summer 2016, we organised a church presence at the Kiltarlity Gala Day. In partnership with King's Fellowship and the Barn Church, we erected prayer tents, a portrait-painting tent and face-painting tent. During the day our prayer tent was fully subscribed, and many positive conversations were held with non-church folk. Around 40 people accessed the tents.

In January 2016, members of Kiltarlity Congregation partnered with the Kirkhill congregation to host a "ladies' night" at Kirkhill Church. Local businesses were invited to set up stalls and provide Valentine themed shopping opportunities for local ladies from both communities. Over 100 attended and £1000 was raised for the Elsie Normington Foundation for children with learning difficulties.

#### **1.4. Communication**

We have a "church" column in the quarterly "Kiltarlity News" and along with Kirkhill produce our own newsletter, "The Anchor". Our website ([www.kiltarlityandkirkhill.org.uk](http://www.kiltarlityandkirkhill.org.uk)) is regularly updated and provides access to recordings of the weekly service. Our Facebook page, joint with Kirkhill, is well "liked" and has proved to be very effective in communicating church events and activities to the wider community. Christmas and Easter invitation cards are produced jointly with Kirkhill and the Free Church and distributed to households throughout the whole parish.

Communication with the congregation is by way of church intimations, weekly news-sheet/Bulletin, website, "The Anchor", and as and when required by composite or personal e-mail. Minutes of Kirk Session meetings are available to all unless covering issues where confidentiality is necessary. Being linked with Kiltarlity we obviously have a close relationship with them and joint services and meetings of office-bearers take place regularly.

#### **1.5. Discipleship**

[Tell us about how you encourage and help people to grow in their faith; how do you promote personal devotion, bible study and opportunities for reflection; how do you encourage people to consider becoming a Communicant member of the church; what resources do you use?](#)

The congregational questionnaire revealed that 76% of the congregation agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that "the church has helped me understand more clearly what it means to be a Christian" although only 65% agreed/strongly agreed that they had "grown in their faith in recent years". Along with the emphasis on mission, Sunday morning teaching has focused on encouraging people to grow in their faith, applying scripture to daily living

and fostering a discipleship culture within the congregation. This approach will take time to bed in and needs to be complemented with other initiatives and activities.

In the past there have been a number of bible study and house groups across both parishes. This year we established 3 Life groups, which aim to encourage and help people grow in their faith, become “whole of life” disciples and positively impact the world around them for God’s Kingdom. These groups incorporate worship, prayer bible teaching and discussion in table groups. Attendance at the Life Group “Connect & Encounter” is currently around 18 folk (see Appendix 3 with description of this Life Group). The other two Life Groups are currently dormant due to the leaders not having enough time to restart or leaving the area.

There is a prayer meeting held jointly between Kirkhill and Kiltarlity at 7.30pm on Mondays (previously Wed). Attendance varies from 5-10 people from both churches and prayers are offered extemporaneously or pre-prepared. We also held two fuller evenings of prayer for renewal and revival in the area in 2015.

Jonathan and Kate are Scottish Ambassadors for Love After Marriage (LAM) Scotland ([www.nothinghidden.org.uk/meet-the-team](http://www.nothinghidden.org.uk/meet-the-team)). The goal of Love After Marriage is to instruct and guide married couples into a relationship characterized by openness, vulnerability and love as an ongoing lifestyle. The belief is that healthy strong marriages make for strong leaders and strong churches. Jonathan and Kate partner with other churches in the area to facilitate 3.5 day intensive workshops. They also held a 12 week LAM course for 5 couples in their home, attended by members of Kirkhill congregation and others resident in Kiltarlity parish.

In August this year, we held a region-wide worship event with “Filling Station Scotland” joint with Kirkhill to provide opportunities for renewal and revitalisation of faith. About 50 people attended this from various churches in the area and provided a spring-board for the launch of the Life Group “Connect and Encounter”.

Over the past 18 months we have welcomed 14 new members. Jonathan visits prospective members and discusses membership vows and what commitment to a local family of God might mean. Sermon themes regularly emphasise the importance of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit, and the building up and expansion of the local fellowship. Regular invitations to membership are issued on the back of these sermons.

## **1.6. Children & Youth**

[Tell us about how you engage with children and young people; what youth organisations are attached to your congregation; how do you support them; and what Christian education do you offer children and young people?](#)

See section 1.3 re schools. We have Sunday Club each week with a leader and rota of six teachers. Attendance ranges from 3 to 10 children each Sunday. The Sunday Club organises and delivers the Christmas service and its prize-giving service. We also hold family services from time to time. Young people of secondary school-age meet together in “Youth Church.”

Free Church youth joined with us during the Youth Alpha course. Currently there is only one member of Youth Church at Kiltarlity.

Along with Kiltarlity Free Church and Kirkhill we have participated in the quest for a youth worker under the "Young Life" programme to focus on building relationships with churched and unchurched teenagers. Plans for recruitment are at an advanced stage.

We hold an annual "Fun Day" in July for children of primary school age, in the village hall. These are well attended (30+ on average)- this year's topic was "Jonah and the Whale".

In summer 2016, we partnered with Kirkhill Church and Youth With a Mission (YWAM) to bring a team of 12 teenagers from the US to carry out a week-long engagement with young folk in Tomnacross and Kirkhill Primary Schools. During the day, the team interacted with the young people, doing assembly and teaching slots as well as engaging in sports over lunch and break time. The team were very well received. In the evenings we held gatherings in Kirkhill Church and grounds, which grew in attendance to over 40 kids by the end of the week. We believe that 10-12 made commitments of faith in Jesus for the first time during this week.

### **1.7. Pastoral Care & Fellowship**

[Tell us about how you care for your congregation; how do you build and encourage friendships and a sense of belonging amongst your congregation and beyond?](#)

We are a small congregation and everyone knows everyone else. Over the last year we have begun having tea/coffee after morning worship and most folk stay on for a blether. There is a lot of informal visitation of members amongst themselves and each elder has a district. Generally speaking, elders visit with communion cards twice a year. Jonathan visits as time permits and need arises. On an average week, he makes about 3 pastoral visits and deals with 7 pastoral situations by phone and/or email across both parishes. There are about 12 funerals per year jointly between the two parishes. Members and adherents are prioritised for visits by their elder or minister on the basis of the triage system below.

1. Sudden trauma – illness/bereavement
2. In hospital for few days
3. Too old/infirm to come to church, live on own and don't have much family support
4. Too/old infirm to come to church, live on own and have good family support
5. Able to come to church, but for various reasons need encouragement to be actively part of the church family

Since our linkage with Kirkhill in 1982 many friendships have been made and relationships formed amongst folk from each parish. However, it would also be true to say there have been tensions in the past and there is a need for continuing diligence and intention to honour each other and work together for the gospel.



The congregation also has a high proportion of people in the “elderly” category (appendix 1). Pastoral needs are likely to continue to increase, and without urgent attention to mission and discipleship there will be fewer younger and fit folk to provide this care.

## **1.8. World Mission**

[Tell us about what you do to support the work of the whole church in the world?](#)

We participate in "Souper Sunday" for the Church of Scotland AIDS Project when the service is conducted by office bearers/congregation. We have a representative on Christian Aid Scotland's Inverness committee and actively support its ongoing "Mothers in Malawi" project - with Kirkhill we have held 2 fund raising concerts for this. We have a collection for Christian Aid week.

The Sunday Club currently sponsors a Kenyan child through the Balcraig Foundation. Lanoi is a Maasai girl from Suswa in the Great Rift Valley and was born in 2001. Her father had died when she was just a baby and her mother was too ill to look after children. Due to extreme poverty in the family, Lanoi was taken into the care of the Kenyan Children's Home. Lanoi now attends school and is doing well.

## **1.9. The wider Church of Scotland**

[Tell us about your relationship with Presbytery? Do you understand where your church fits into the Presbytery Plan? What involvement do you have with the Councils and Committees of the General Assembly?](#)

Our relationship with Presbytery is a bit remote but getting better since we have our new Minister. The elders understand how we fit in to Presbytery Plan. Our Session Clerk, treasurer, Property Convenor and safeguarding coordinator liaise with appropriate folk/depts. at 121 generally and on an *ad hoc* basis. We only have 3 subscribers to "Life & Work" and we are not particularly engaged currently with Crossreach or other Church of Scotland initiatives or councils.

## **2. Resources**

### **2.1. Finances**

[Comment on your ability to finance all that you are doing, is it sustainable financially? How is the work of your church financed? When did you last do a stewardship programme? Do you produce an annual budget? Are you able to meet your annual Mission & Ministries allocation fully?](#)

Over the last few years we have spent a great deal on both our church and our manse. We are fortunate in having a large fabric fund and had no difficulty in meeting this expenditure from that and from an appeal we made for help. Capital-wise we are well off but revenue-wise, though classed as a “Necessary Charge” by Presbytery, we do not raise sufficient income to generate an M&M contribution equating to 50% of the full cost of ministry. Our

main source of income is of course offerings and since Jonathan arrived these have increased significantly (see Table 1).

Table 1: Kiltarlity Church – total income over past three years (not including contributions from Fabric Fund)

	Income	% increase on previous year
2014	19729	
2015	24606	24.7
2016	27590	12.1

We have raised some cash for "Young Life" (see section 1.6) separately through an appeal. We are not able to fund everything we are doing from revenue but we still have adequate reserves. Notwithstanding our large fabric and vacancy expenses being over, we are currently unable to balance the books without encroaching on reserves, but the rate of attrition is now much less than it was. For the foreseeable future this is sustainable. We produce an annual budget with each year's accounts, and we have always been able to meet our M & M allocation. We undertook a stewardship programme in autumn 2015, focusing on financial giving. The background and rationale for tithing was taught over a series of Sundays, and the congregation invited to increase their giving in response to God's call. Also the treasurer regularly exhorts members to review their giving.

## 2.2. Buildings

What state of repair is your/are your buildings in? How much are your premises used each week? Are your premises fit for purpose, do they comply with all current legislation e.g. disabled access? Do your buildings serve your mission? Do you have any plans for refurbishment?

Both manse and church are in a good state of repair and fit for purpose, complying with all current legislation. Only on-going maintenance and routine repairs are anticipated and we have no extensive plans for refurbishment, other than the removal of some pews on the left of the chancel area to create some flexible seating and room for a piano and other musical instruments. The church is used once per week and for occasional funerals and weddings. The village hall is used for café church services and other events when hall space is required.

## 2.3. People – Ministry team and Leadership

Do you have a ministry team (paid and/or volunteers)? What support is there for your minister/ministry team e.g. admin support? How many people do you employ and in what capacity are they employed? Do all your employees have contracts of employment? Do you meet the new pension law requirements? How do you appraise and develop your employees? How do you encourage and develop new leaders from your congregation? How does your Kirk Session function?

Our ministry team constitutes the Minister Jonathan (50 % of full time Word and Sacrament). Our organist, Tonya, is self-employed and is line-managed by the Jonathan. Appraisal and development is conducted “on the job” and through regular one-to-one meetings. There is no ministry team as such in the strictest sense and there is no formal admin support for the minister. Office-bearers and members of the congregation support the management of the church through help with AV on Sunday mornings, production of the Anchor magazine and weekly bulletin, and management of rotas, for Sunday tea/coffee, flowers, finance, AV and Sunday Club. Nevertheless there is still a heavy admin load that Jonathan has to deal with across two churches.

The minister has a small advisory group comprising Session Clerks from both congregations and other elders as required. This group has recently been reconstituted following appointment of a new Session Clerk at Kirkhill. The minister and Session Clerks regularly meet to match up people to roles/calling based on the FATSO assessment (John Wimber), where we ask is someone Faithful (to God and others), Available, Teachable, Spirit-filled and Obedient. We also ask whether they have the skills and talents needed for the role identified.

## **2.4. People – Structure and Organisation**

[How do your organisational structures enable and encourage the work of your church?](#)

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Kirkhill and Kiltarlity churches moved from a Deacon’s Court Constitution to a Unitary Constitution. We anticipate that this will provide increased organisational efficiency and encourage more members to take on tasks and roles without the long-term commitment to an ordained position. Currently the Session comprises 5 elders and we are looking to appoint a further 2-3 new elders.

## **3. Relationships**

[Tell us about the nature of the working relationships between office bearers, the Minister/Ministry team and the congregation?](#)

The relationships between minister, office bearers and congregation are good; 84% of the congregation agreed/strongly agreed that the “our church leaders are approachable.” And no one disagreed with this statement. Jonathan meets with David Garvie, Session Clerk on a monthly basis to plan services, discuss any pastoral concerns, orchestrate Kirk Session meetings, and explore any outreach initiatives and communication initiatives/issues with congregation and community.

## **4. What are the values and convictions which shape and direct the life of your congregation?**

During the latter part of 2015, the office bearers engaged with the Presbytery Planning Committee (PCC) to take forward our thinking on mission, vision and values. We engaged

the help of a professional facilitator and met together for an afternoon. The outcomes of this meeting (jointly with Kirkhill) were written up and submitted to the PCC, and are summarised below. During January and February 2016, the teaching on Sunday mornings covered the 7 areas included under “Our Vision and Values”.

**Our overall Mission:** We are two rural congregations in the Highlands who are committed to living in the love of Jesus, becoming more like him, and making his love known to all in our communities. We are a family who love having fun together and honouring God in the way we live. We are passionate about Jesus being the centre of everything we do.

**Our Aim:** is for everyone to feel welcomed and find a home at Kirkhill & Kiltarlity Parish Churches, regardless of church background, or whether they have faith, a little faith or none.

### **Our Vision and Values**

- I. **God first in everything –**
  - We love Jesus and keep Him at the centre of everything
  - We worship God with passion and devotion – “surely God is in this place”
  - We believe the Bible is the word of God and directly relevant to how we live our lives today
  - We live and pray at all times in the power of the Holy Spirit
- II. **Every generation and all sorts of people engaged in the life of the church –**
  - We love everyone well - honouring, caring for and serving each other
  - We ensure that everyone feels welcome at our worship services, meetings and events
- III. **People becoming disciples –**
  - We believe that each person has gifts and talents and should be encouraged to develop and use these to bless the church and grow God’s Kingdom.
- IV. **Developing leaders -**
  - We believe that Christ gave the gift of leaders to his church – apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists and the church will grow in size and maturity when we identify and develop the leaders he gives us
- V. **Actively engaging with our communities -**
  - We are a family on mission with a heart to serve our community and see it filled with the life of God and everyone experiencing the good news of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom
- VI. **A growing church**
  - We believe that God’s will is to add to the church, on a regular basis, those who are being saved
  - We believe that numerical growth will be such that we will outgrow our buildings
- VII. **Engagement with the wider church**
  - We seek to partner with other churches across our neck of the woods and beyond so that we can unite in pursuing God’s Kingdom and seeing lives transformed by his love

**5. How has the life and witness of your congregation developed and changed since the last review by Presbytery?**

Our Congregation is growing and is more cohesive. Things are more informal. After several vacancies we feel secure having now recruited an excellent and popular minister. People seem much more inclined to contribute to life of congregation. When asked what they thought their church did best, the main feedback (of those that responded to the question), was that they thought the church was warm and welcoming, yet providing a challenging engagement for all age-groups.

**6. What challenges have you faced in the last five years and how have these been dealt with?**

Since 2002 we have had 4 ministers with fairly long periods of pulpit supply in between appointments. This lack of stability had tended to make folk a bit lazy about both attendance and giving. Things have now stabilised and are improving.

Our church roof had to be renewed at a cost of £45K+ and we raised this ourselves by an appeal + General Trustees grant. The congregation really pulled together on this. The manse had to be extensively refurbished which impacted on our reserves.

Our congregational age profile is too high compared to our parish. Nearly 45% of the congregation is aged 65 or over and younger age groups are under-represented (Appendix 1). We are hoping, and succeeding to some extent, to reduce it by making things more appealing to younger families and individuals. However, more work needs to be done to evolve our church services towards a more family- friendly style and format.

**7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

## **SECTION 2: CONGREGATIONAL FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN**

### **1. Vision for our mission as a local church over the next five years**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

In Section 1 (our story) we described what we are presently doing, whether what we were doing was sustainable, and what challenges we thought were facing us in each area of church life. These deliberations were based on the views of minister and office-bearers and returns from the congregational questionnaire (34 returns). A congregational meeting was held on 30<sup>th</sup> October (with 24 attendees) in which participants were invited to express their views on what should be the priorities for mission and church life.

In this section, we have set out our SMART goals based on what we have said in section 1, feedback from the congregational meeting, and further deliberations by the eldership. The goals focus primarily on our emerging vision for mission, outreach and growth, and how this impacts each area of church life.

#### **1.2. Worship**

At the congregational meeting there was continued support expressed for the current approach to Sunday worship (see Section 1, item 1.2) though a small minority felt less comfortable with some charismatic elements that are now in the service. Options for future style of worship could include more family-friendly service formats on a Sunday (and possibly other days during the week), including café church services and messy church. A desire to continue with, and increase, the number of café church services was strongly supported by the congregational questionnaire and the congregational meeting. With the departure of Kirkhill elder Alasdair Morrison in September 2016, we now have a significant gap in our music worship leading capacity, which impacts the potential viability of our Third Sunday evening worship service.

***Worship goal 1:*** *by end Dec 2017 increase the number of members involved in service preparation and leading, including readings/prayers, children's' addresses, preaching and music.*

***Worship goal 2:*** *to establish a regular pattern of café church services in the village hall; initially 3 services on the first Sunday of April, June and October in 2017; pattern to be reviewed in conjunction with Kirkhill by end Jan 2018; regular logistic team to be identified and set up by end Feb 2017.*

***Worship goal 3:*** *Jonathan and Session Clerks to review the aim and format of Third Sunday praise evening service by end April 2017 and to encourage everyone to pray for a worship leader to replace Alasdair Morrison; recommendations to Session meeting in May 2017.*

### 1.3. Local Mission

A number of options for local mission initiatives were identified at the congregational meeting in addition to what we already do in the schools (Open the Book; Assemblies; YWAM) and at the Gala. A suggestion was made to run an after school club in the church in partnership with the Free Church and Tomnacross PS. This could also include starting a children's choir and organ lessons if there was interest.

**Local Mission goal 1:** *to explore with Tomnacross School the possibility of starting a weekly, Friday after school club in the church in the autumn 2017; considering also the possibility of building in a children's choir/organ lessons; Ethna Ferguson and Tonya Clement to take lead in developing proposals and reporting to Session in May 2017.*

The last Alpha course, held in Kirkhill in 2015 was popular and well attended, but after re-location of previous key team members, there is a need to establish a new team to service new courses on a regular basis.

**Local Mission goal 2:** *in partnership with Kirkhill, form a new team for delivering a yearly Alpha course. Location and team to be agreed by April 2017; training June 2017; course to run Sept-Dec 2017; review Jan 2018.*

Lastly, it is notable that we currently focus our mission around what **WE** believe we should be doing to serve the community and share the gospel. It would be valuable to carry out an exercise/survey of how the community views the church and where the church could partner more effectively with the local community to meet needs.

**Local Mission goal 3:** *in partnership with Kirkhill, identify tools available for carrying out a community mission audit and form a team to undertake it. Team and tools to be decided by March 2018, with audit carried out over June-Dec period of 2018; reporting to Session in January 2019.*

### 1.4. Communication

At the congregational meeting it was suggested that we could share the Anchor magazine more widely outwith the parishes, that more people should post on Facebook and that we should have a Youth Facebook page and Twitter account. It was also suggested that we consider how roles in the church are advertised to allow people to assess whether their strengths/giftings matched the role.

Feedback from the congregational meeting suggested that we should continue face-face contact with the community – blethering to everyone, and that we should let people know that we have a church website by putting up notices in village shop etc. inviting people to have a regular look at the web site.

**Communication Goal 1:** *Anchor publishing team to consider the value, and cost, of sharing the magazine to areas outwith the parishes by end June 2017.*

**Communication Goal 2:** *Kirk Session to establish a "Worship & Communications" team/committee by June 2017 to be led by Jonathan and David.*

## 1.5. Discipleship

For the vast majority of the Kiltarlity congregation, discipleship takes place on a Sunday morning and via private devotions. One person attends the Connect and Encounter Life group, and one other attends the joint weekly prayer meeting at Kirkhill. The most pressing need is to develop a discipleship culture within the congregation, i.e. that we exist as disciples of Jesus Christ in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ. A key element in this is to have a regular preaching series on discipleship.

***Discipling Goal 1:*** *to have at least one sermon series per annum focusing on discipleship starting with a series on Acts running from April-June 2017.*

At the congregation meeting it was suggested that we:

- Needed to encourage increased participation in church activities
- To have a suggestion box for people to submit ideas for volunteering and things they are willing to organise
- To explore possibility of having evenings with invited speakers – people of faith involved in different aspects of life

In addition to continuing with the Connect and Encounter Life Group, the feedback above from the congregational meeting suggests an interest in “whole life discipleship” and exploring how to be a person of faith can be fruitful across the (so-called) sacred/secular divide.

***Discipling Goal 2:*** *explore interest in “whole of life discipleship” (and other discipling approaches) within the congregation and make proposals to Session before end Oct 2017*

***Discipling Goal 3:*** *in conjunction with Kirkhill, and building on previous success, continue with plans to hold regular fellowship/discipling evenings; plans to be put forward by end Dec 2017*

There is also interest in developing the prayer life across both congregations and a partnership with some Inverness Churches has led to possible involvement in 24/7 prayer weeks.

***Discipling Goal 4:*** *in partnership with other Inverness churches, and Inverness presbytery encourage involvement of the congregation in the Church of England’s UK initiative on 24/7 prayer in June 2017 and in future years.*

## 1.6. Children & Youth

Feedback from the congregational meeting suggested we should do more to engage with Primary School age children and to encourage joint working and services with the Scouts and Beavers. Another suggestion was that we should go through the cradle roll and personally invite children to Sunday Club. There was also a call to look at the programme for Sunday Club and whether it was suitably engaging for children who come to church infrequently. Lastly, it was suggested that starting a children’s choir and perhaps organ lessons could be



done in partnership with Tomnacross PS and in conjunction with the proposed after-school club (see Local Mission Goal 1). This may in turn encourage parents to come to church.

It was suggested at the congregational meeting that we could find out about opportunities for our youth to join with youth groups in other churches. Our yearly plans include continuation with Sunday Club and Youth church with on-going review of teaching content by Session as per our established practice. In 2017 we will be called to play an active role in supporting the Young Life Area Director through induction and goal setting for the work across both Kiltarlity and Kirkhill parishes.

***Children and youth goal 1*** – explore scope for partnering with Scouts and Beavers and holding a yearly joint service; Sheila Moir to investigate and report back to Session by end June 2017.

***Children and youth goal 2*** – Jonathan and Ellenor Thomas to continue to play active role on Young Life Local Committee and contribute to induction of Young Life Area Director Richard Dahl in 2018, ensuring good relationships and information exchange with the congregation and encouraging participation in Young Life Activities as volunteers.

### **1.7. Pastoral Care & Fellowship**

Suggestions from the congregational meeting included providing an occasional soup and sandwich lunch; developing a more formalised system for remembering people in prayer; starting a walking group (for both bonding and outreach) and ensuring an appropriate balance between comfort and challenge in our Sunday services.

The congregation also has a high proportion of people in the “elderly” category (appendix 1). Pastoral needs are likely to continue to increase, and without urgent attention to mission and discipleship, and getting new people involved in church life, there will be fewer younger and fit folk to provide this care.

With the appointment of new elders, there will be opportunities to re-work the districts and ensure that more of our vulnerable and elderly are visited regularly. However, we also need to evolve our current approach to pastoral care by expanding the number of people involved in pastoral visiting and developing a formal team structure.

***Pastoral Goal 1:*** Kirk Session to consider establishing a Pastoral Care Team by Sept 2017; non-elders will be invited to volunteer for this by end Dec 2017 with appropriate training by mid-2018.

***Pastoral Goal 2:*** after new elders are appointed, Jonathan and David Garvie to review the districts by June 2017 and ensure that each elder has a manageable pastoral visiting workload

## **1.8. World Mission**

In addition to the links and fund raising events outlined under this topic in section 1, we recently established links with the Highland Supports Refugees charity and it was proposed at the congregational meeting that we increase our awareness and support for this group. From time to time, we are asked to consider supporting other charities and requests are dealt with as appropriately by the Session. To improve this ad-hoc working there is scope for selecting a sub-set of charities to be our main focus for fund-raising in the year.

**World Mission Goal 1:** *Continue to hold at least 3 fund-raising events (e.g. music concerts) per annum in support of the Highlands Supports Refugees (Jan); Christian Aid (May); Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS project (June); these events to be held in partnership with Kirkhill*

**World Mission Goal 2:** *Linked to Goal1, Kirk Session to review our fund raising for charities in January each year and agree a yearly short list of our “preferred” charities on which we can focus our efforts.*

## **1.9. Relationships with wider Church of Scotland**

The congregational meeting revealed a lack of awareness of the relative responsibilities of the General Assembly and Presbytery or how they interacted with the local church. An information meeting could help address this and encourage those other than office bearers to engage with the wider church. There is also scope for better partnership working with churches in our Presbytery. Current relationships with non Church of Scotland congregations are good; e.g. the Free Church and other churches in town (King’s Inverness, and Christ Church Inverness) with sharing of resources and joint ventures (e.g. Café church, Love After Marriage and Life Groups).

**Wider Church of Scotland Goal 1:** *in October 2017, jointly with Kirkhill, invite Trevor Hunt, Presbytery Clerk (or another Presbytery Office Bearer) to an information evening to give an overview of the workings of the Church of Scotland*

## **1.10. Finances**

Financial giving has increased over the last two years, but more needs to be done to ensure financial sustainability. Although we meet our M&M contribution each year this contribution is not sufficient to sustain 50% of a full time Ministry post and we are therefore aid-receiving. Given that income has increased by an average of 18% over the last two years (Table 1) it would seem possible that we should set an ambitious goal of increasing our income over the next 5 years to generate sufficient M&M to fund 50% of ministry. It was proposed also at the congregational meeting that regular information on finances should be published in the Anchor magazine.

**Financial goal 1:** *to increase financial giving by an average of 12% per annum with the aim of generating an income of over £40,000/annum by end 2021; regular calls for folk to review their giving (and move to direct debit and Gift Aid), through regular stewardship teaching (3 Sundays autumn each year), the Anchor magazine and end of year “Big Wins” service*

### **1.11. Buildings**

Some thought was given at the congregational meeting about how we might make the church building available and accessible for greater use. Suggestions included having flexible and accessible seating for the less mobile, improving the paths and lighting to the church, and improving the sound proofing between the Sunday Club room and the rest of the church. Our water supply also needs to be upgraded – as it is currently on a private supply. It was also noted at the congregational meeting that the village hall is currently used effectively from time to time and this works well as an alternative venue when we need more flexible seating, e.g. for café church.

***Buildings goal 1:*** Property and Finance Committee in partnership with Highland Council to draw up plans for installing lighting along the two paths leading to the church; install lights by end September 2017 before winter.

***Buildings goal 2:*** Property and Finance Committee to arrange before Easter 2017 the removal of three pews at front of church to allow flexible seating to be installed and creation of wheel-chair space.

***Buildings goal 3:*** Property and Finance Committee to arrange installation of water purification unit to water supply by end Feb 2017.

### **1.12. People – our Ministry team and Leadership**

There is a pressing need to identify and disciple emerging leaders. The age profile of the congregation suggests that within 10 years numbers may be up to half what they are today (appendix 1). Therefore we need to begin now with the task of nurturing and discipling leaders, with a particular focus on mission and outreach rather than expecting new leaders to carry on maintaining a *status quo* that is no longer sustainable. It could be argued that the most important task for Jonathan at this stage in the life of Kiltarlity Church is to invest time in discipling new leaders, be that elders, Sunday Club leaders, house group/life group leaders etc.

***People and leadership goal 1:*** Jonathan to review different approaches to identifying and discipling leaders and make recommendations to Session in June 2017; pilot approaches by end Dec 2017, with a view to establishing a leadership development programme across both churches in January 2018; programme likely to include a mix of meetings, private study, face to face meetings etc.

### **1.13. People - Structure and Organisation**

With the on-going reduction in the number of full-time Word & Sacrament Ministry posts in the Church of Scotland there is a need for Presbytery plans to include provision for reducing the number of full time W&S posts. In the past this has been achieved by establishing new linkages and unions. In recognition that this strategy has not been successful in fostering local mission and church growth, and more often than not cements decline, the General Assembly 2016 approved the following deliverance:

*“Recognising the need for a variety of models of ministry in a changing culture, instruct the [Ministries] Council to explore further practical proposals and a legal framework for the implementation in appropriate places of a ‘Hub-style’ ministry”*

Presbyterys have been urged to (General Assembly remits 2016):

*“begin to consider how they might prepare for hub style ministries through their Presbytery Plans and other local arrangements”*

The prospect of a Hub style ministry where a number of charges are grouped together under one fulltime W&S and other ordained ministries, may offer, in time, an alternative model of organisation to that of linkages and unions and closure of places of worship. Nevertheless for our context there may be efficiencies to be gained by considering an administrative union between Kiltarlity and Kirkhill.

The current Presbytery Plan will be finalised in May 2017 and includes a proposal to unite Kiltarlity and Kirkhill and close Kiltarlity Church building. The plan is under debate at time of writing. There was discussion at the congregational meeting on this topic. It is recognised that there is duplication in the work of the two Sessions although there was strong support for maintaining two places of worship.

Currently, worship at Kirkhill is from 10 to 11am, and worship at Kiltarlity from 11.30am-12.30pm (approx.). This current arrangement took some time to be agreed and is a compromise between the desires of both congregations to have a morning service, and the need for Jonathan to travel between the two charges and have some pastoral and fellowship time with the congregation at Kirkhill. However, the current timings on a Sunday morning reduces the amount of post-service pastoral and fellowship time that Jonathan has with the Kirkhill congregation to around 10 minutes compared to on average 40 minutes with the Kiltarlity congregation. The current arrangement also makes it difficult for Jonathan to devote time and energy for a different kind of service later in the day, e.g. Third Sunday praise. One option might be to train people to lead services (see People and Leadership Goal 1 above), so that Jonathan would lead worship at each charge on alternate Sundays. Such an approach might facilitate growth through multiplying ministry.

Given that the Presbytery Planning Committee will require input from congregations in relation to deliberations on future constitutional arrangements, pattern of services and allocation of ministry posts etc. across its charges, there is therefore a need for us to be proactive in evaluating options in these areas.

***Structure and Organisation goal 1: together with Kirkhill, set up a joint working group to explore a possible union between Kirkhill and Kiltarlity; the remit of the group being to consider the benefits or otherwise of a union, to explore future provision of worship centres and patterns of worship, and make recommendations for consideration by both Kirk Sessions; group to comprise Jonathan and one office bearer and non-office bearer from each congregation; working group approved by end March 2017; reporting by end November 2017.***

### 1.14. Timing of goals

The chart below displays the timing and duration of goals for the first 3 years of the plan.

Topic	Goal	Time Span					
		Jan-Jun 2017	July-Dec 2017	Jan-Jun 2018	July-Dec 2018	Jan-Jun 2019	July-Dec 2019
Worship	WG1- increase number of members involved in service preparation and leading	■					
	WG2 - establish regular pattern of café church services in the village hall	■					
	WG3 - review aim and format of Third Sunday praise evening service	■					
Local Mission	LG1 - explore possible Friday after school club in the church	■					
	LG2- form a new team for delivering a yearly Alpha course		■				
	LG3 - Carry out a Community Mission Audit			■			
Communication	CG1 - consider sharing the Anchor magazine to areas outwith the parishes	■					
	CG2 - establish a "Worship & Communications" team/committee	■					
Discipleship	DG1 - at least one sermon series per annum focusing on discipleship		■		■		■
	DG2 -explore "whole life discipleship" options		■				
	DG3 - plans for fellowship/discipling group	■					
	DG4 - involvement in 24/7 prayer with Inverness churches	■					
Children & Youth	CYG1 -explore scope for partnering with Scouts and Beavers		■				
	CYG2 contribute to induction of Young Life Area Director Richard Dahl			■			
Pastoral Care & Fellowship	PG1 - consider establishing a Pastoral Care Team	■					
	PG2 - review elder's districts	■					
World Mission	WMG1 - hold at least 3 fund raising events per annum	■	■	■	■	■	■
	WMG2 - review short list of sponsored charities	■		■		■	
Wider Church	WCG1 - Presbytery Clerk information evening			■			
Finances	WCG1 - increase financial giving by 12%/annum; stewardship teaching each autumn			■		■	■
Buildings	BG1 -install lights along paths to church	■					
	BG2 - remove pews at front of church	■					
	BG3 - install water purification unit	■					
Ministry team & Leadership	PL1 - review, pilot and implement leadership development programme	■					
Structure & Organisation	SO1 - establish joint working group to explore union between K&K	■					

**Appendix 1 – Comparing parish and congregation**

The graph below compares the age profile of Kiltarlity parish in 2011 with that of the congregation in May 2016 (Church census day). Note the under-representation of folk under the age of 65 in the congregation.

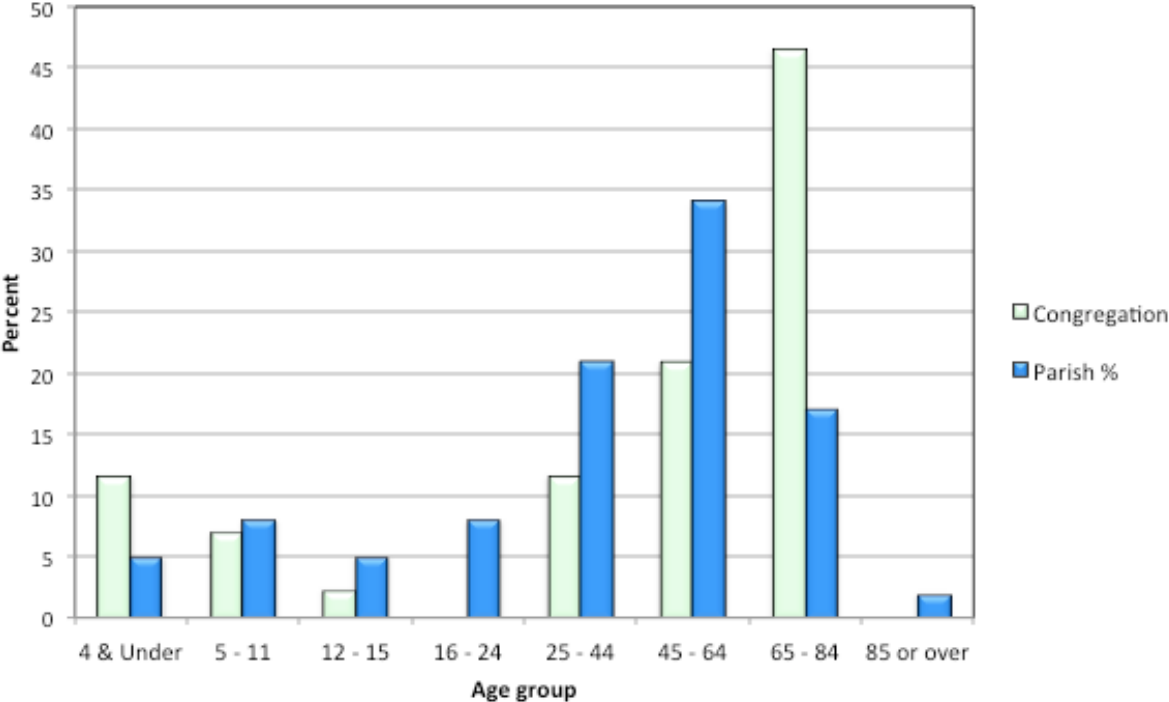


Fig 1. Comparison of age profile of Kiltarlity parish with that of the congregation

## Appendix 2 – Congregational questionnaire

Table 1: Extent of agreement (% of responders) expressed by Kiltarlity congregation with 8 statements relating to church life

	Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Disagree
	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
<b>Total Responses: 34</b>					
Our congregation is friendly to new people	56%	38%	3%	3%	0%
Our congregation is welcoming and accessible to all ages	38%	59%	3%	0%	0%
I would invite my friends to be part of our congregation	32%	47%	18%	3%	0%
We are known for being loving and helpful in our community	18%	47%	35%	0%	0%
Our church leaders are approachable	62%	32%	6%	0%	0%
The church has helped me understand more clearly what it means to be a Christian	32%	44%	21%	3%	0%
I have grown in my faith in recent years	18%	47%	29%	6%	0%
The church encourages me to share my Christian faith in my daily life	32%	50%	15%	3%	0%

## Appendix 3 - Description of life group “Connect & Encounter”

### Aim

Gathering to connect with God, and each other, to encounter Jesus by His Spirit and grow to be more like Him.....

.....So that we represent our Heavenly Father well, and we are on fire, equipped and ready to impact our world

### The idea

- We meet together to share life with Jesus (John 10: 7-10)
- We grow as a follower of Jesus – knowing more of his presence in our lives by the Holy Spirit; and get to know who we are in him and the great plans he has for our lives (Ephesians 2: 10)
- We grow in faith and confidence so that God can impact people and the world around us, through us
- We can focus on a particular aspect of our faith life such as, identity, purpose, prayer, bible study, worship, leadership development, prophecy, mission to particular groups (e.g. keep fit, schools) etc.

**How often do we meet?** – fortnightly (roughly)

**How long do we meet for?** 19.00-21.30

### What do we do?

- **Worship** –soaking, singing – focusing on God, thanksgiving and praise
- **Teaching** – on a specific topic each week with particular bible passages
- **Table talk** – in our table groups we reflect on how we apply the teaching to our lives- and we pray it in for each person and hold each other accountable to what God is saying to us from week to week.
- **Prayer Ministry** – on table groups and all together
- **Fellowship** – having fun! eating drinking, laughing, crying, make friends

### How do we care for each other?

1. **Honesty.** As trust builds we learn to be honest with each other about our successes and our failures and shortcomings
2. **Love** – welcoming, where people can be themselves and know they are loved and honoured no matter what
3. **Listening** – when one person is sharing everyone really listens. In all responses we think about how to build people up
4. **Confidentiality** – our commitment to each other is to respect the vulnerability and the trust given to us within the group.